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# Religion and Education

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## Religion and Education

Eastern visitors to Iowa often remark that the stately elms over our city streets, the little white churches that dot the countryside, and the numerous denominational colleges encountered throughout the Hawkeye State remind them of New England. The comparison does not end there for Iowa, like many other Midwestern states, is an intellectual offshoot of New England. Thus, in 1953, Iowans gave millions of dollars and a considerable portion of their time to the improvement of denominational schools and colleges. In other words, Iowans are western enough to appreciate the "self-made man," and Yankee enough to honor him if he supports higher education and the church.

Continued signs of religious institutional progress in 1953 were the construction of numerous church buildings and the many churches celebrating their centennial anniversaries. St. Ambrose College at Davenport dedicated its handsome new Christ the King Chapel. At Eldridge, in Scott County, a United Lutheran church had 392 baptized members in March — when five months earlier there had been no church at all.

With so much controversy in the lay world, the





Courtesy U. S. Army

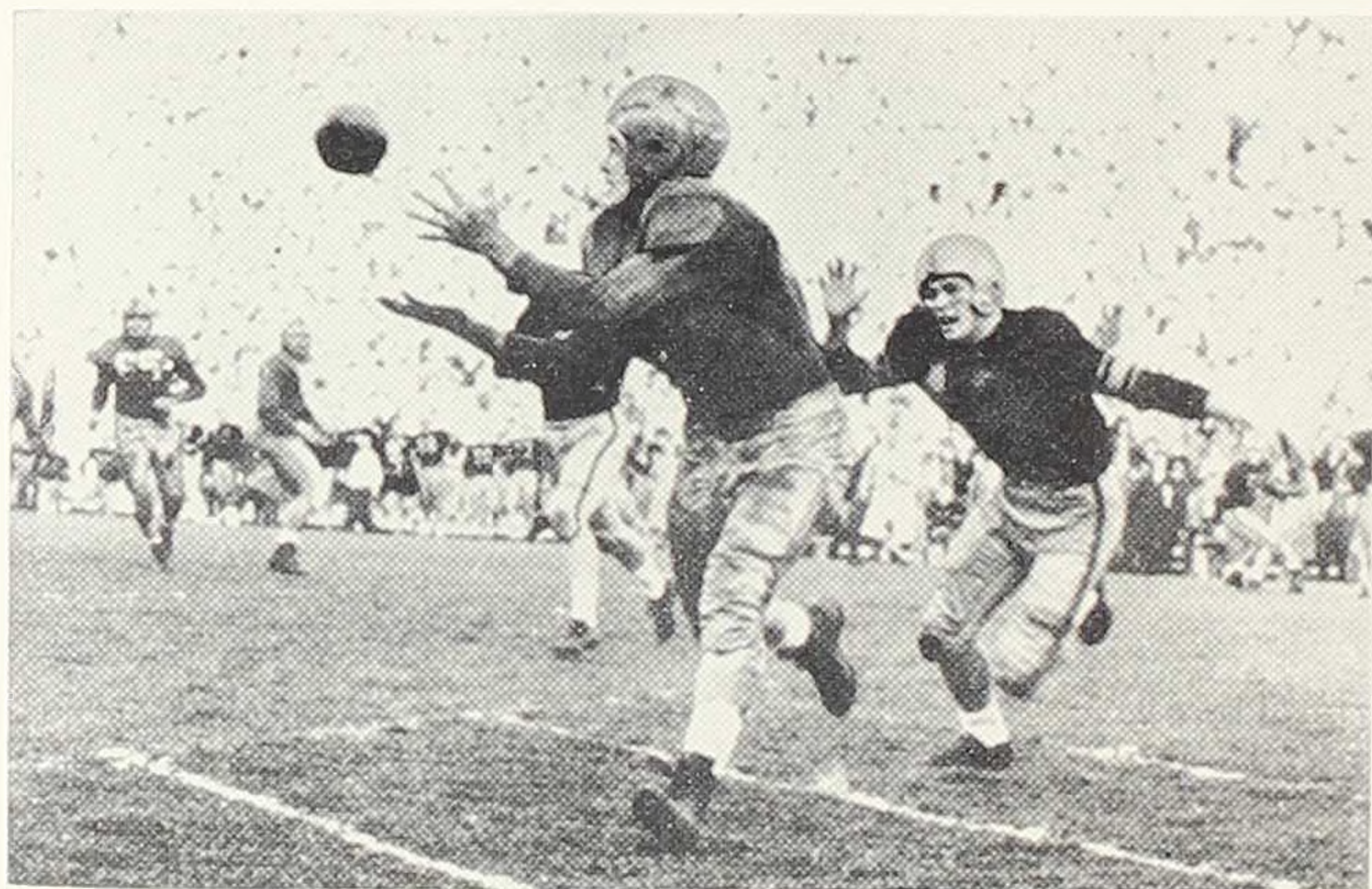
*Left* — COL. IRENE O. GALLOWAY, Director of WAC

*Right* — Greek Queen Comforts Weeping Lad at Cedar Rapids



Courtesy Cedar Rapids Gazette





Courtesy Des Moines *Register and Tribune*

Iowa 14, Notre Dame 14  
Thrilling End to Most Controversial Game of Year



Courtesy Des Moines *Register and Tribune*

Road Block Near Keokuk  
Officers Search for Untaxed Cigarettes from Missouri





Courtesy Cedar Rapids Gazette

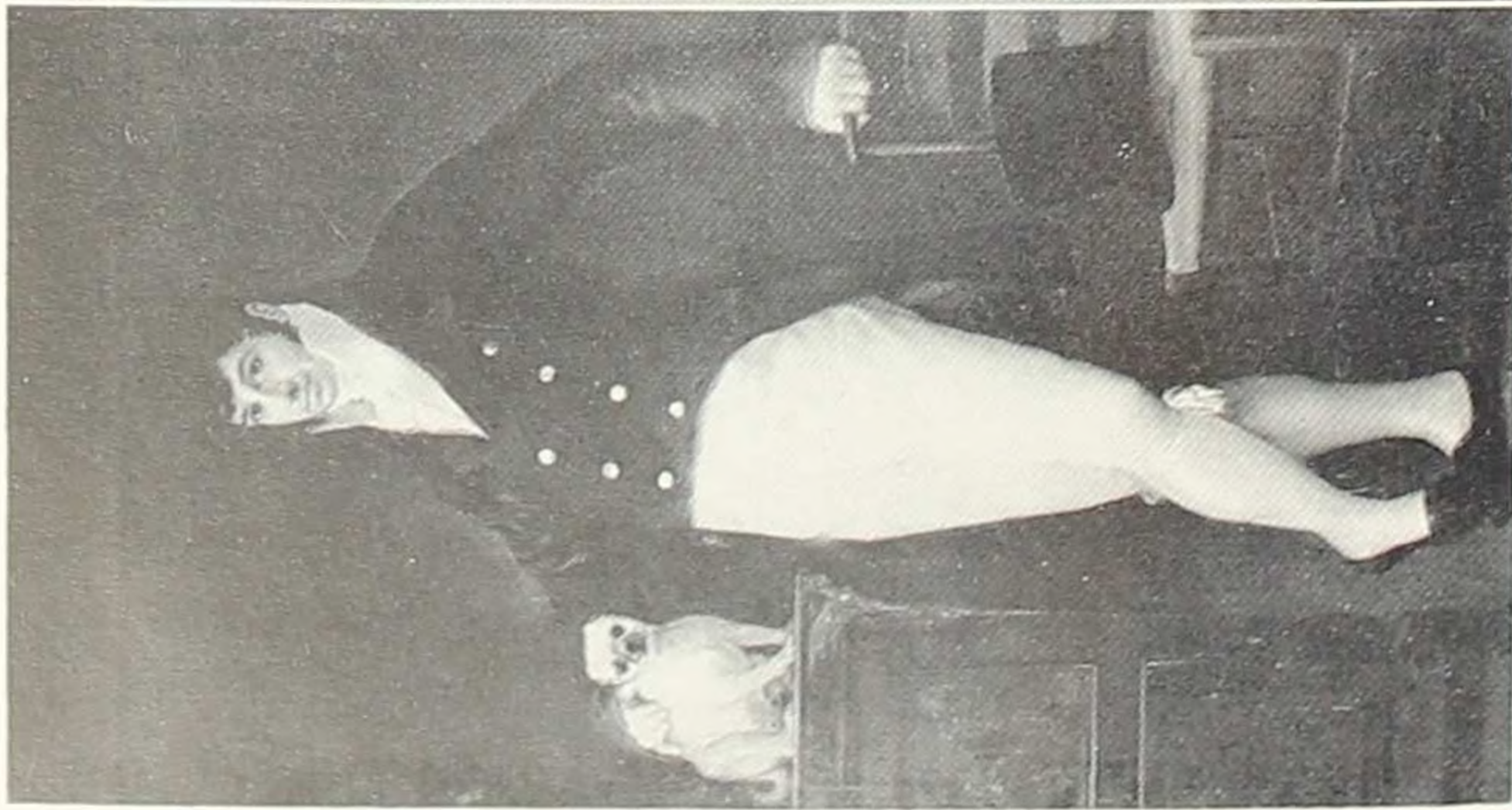
Cornell Centennial Dinner  
Featuring American Town Meeting of the Air



Courtesy Cedar Rapids Gazette

Pioneer Spirit Exemplified at Williamsburg  
Lutherans Donate Labor to Build School





Courtesy Des Moines Art Center



Courtesy Des Moines Register and Tribune

Left — DON MANUEL DE LA PRADA -- Goya Masterpiece Cost \$130,000

Right — Kirkwood School Pupils at Des Moines Practice for A-Bomb Raids



churches inevitably find their affairs entwined with secular activities. A Des Moines church board reversed an earlier stand and permitted Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt to speak in their auditorium. Reports of disaffection among the Amish groups near Oelwein seemed confirmed when several young runaways were sought by their elders. At Des Moines two bearded Amish youths were sentenced to Federal prison terms for refusing induction into the army. While draft board officials decided that Mennonite youths could not be placed in a special conscription category, over one hundred Mennonites near Kalona volunteered to help friends after a damaging storm hit the area. "We decided it was our Christian duty to help some of these storm victims," a Mennonite spokesman said. "We feel such actions are an expression of our faith."

The question of whether television was a blessing or a curse was decided in the negative when the National Layman's Spiritual Life Retreat was held at Des Moines. The delegates were told television was a "one-eyed monster" used to help the audience escape from reality. Ministers were urged, however, to use it to spread their message and keep it from becoming a "destructive, subversive kind of thing."

Subversive influences interested the North Iowa Conference of Methodist churches, too, as a California Congressman named Bishop G. Bromley



Oxnam as a man "who served God on Sunday, and the Communist front the balance of the week." The Iowa Methodists urged Congressional investigating committees to pursue a prudent course or risk a violation of the Bill of Rights.

After years of legal wrangling over the definition of what constitutes a Christian the Iowa Supreme Court held that the \$70,000 estate of a Waterloo physician (who died in 1939) should be distributed to churches and religious institutions. As in past years, Iowa churchmen gave food from the nation's granary to help combat hunger the world over. Among such organized efforts was the all-Lutheran food appeal, which 600 Iowa congregations supported by shipping basic commodities to needy persons in Western Germany.

Late in the summer of 1953 Attorney General Leo Hoegh held that a proposed released-time religious education program in Dubuque was constitutional. Thereupon Superintendent Max Clarke of Dubuque announced that cooperation with religious education advocates would be made only after careful study and in view of the basic American school philosophy that "the spiritual, social, civic, economic and vocational competencies are as important as academic literacy." The Seventh-Day Adventists, in their statewide convention at Nevada, heard an opposing view. Paul Whitlow of Des Moines, director of the Adventists' parochial education in Iowa, declared that



teaching religion in the public schools was "a violation of religious freedom" but admitted it was needed to bring our educational system into "spiritual balance."

At the state Baptist convention at Grinnell, laymen were urged to support both the church and church-operated colleges. O. R. Patrick of Jefferson, the convention president, told delegates that "Christianity stands or falls not by what it was in primitive vision, but by what it is today in actual fact."

At Williamsburg, the congregation of St. Paul's Lutheran Church built a new \$100,000 parochial school, mostly with volunteer labor. The building actually cost church members half that amount, and it represented zeal as well as hard work, for it went up in six months.

Meanwhile, public school enrollment reached an all-time high of well over half a million pupils, and the Department of Public Instruction warned that Iowa could expect at least 564,000 youngsters by 1960. Consolidation and new school construction progressed, but the teacher shortage remained critical. "We need more young people in the teaching profession," Superintendent of Public Instruction Jessie Parker cautioned. One reason why they were not going into teaching, she declared, was that half of Iowa's 4,290 rural teachers received less than \$2,300 a year. This helped explain why only 1,353 teachers were produced



in 1953 for 2,400 new elementary teaching jobs.

Disturbed by the apathy of high school graduates toward teaching, most Iowa colleges held a "Prospective Teacher Day" in November to encourage youth to seek a career in public school teaching. In June about 33,000 eighth graders entered high schools, but 60,000 children were ready for kindergarten or grade school. By 1958, it was expected 125,000 more pupils would be in the lower grades than in 1953. Despite such bright teaching prospects only 2,233 signed up for fall classes at Iowa State Teachers College, a gain of one pupil over 1952. Meanwhile, the draft, job opportunities, and other reasons kept many high school graduates away from Iowa colleges.

During 1953 former State Senator A. L. Doud was hired by the legislative interim committee to survey the tuition costs of private and public colleges and universities. President Virgil Hancher of the State University told Iowa college presidents he believed public and private colleges needed to work together. President Tom E. Shearer of Parsons College agreed that the goal of all Iowa colleges was "to provide the best possible quality of higher education for the young men and women of Iowa."

The year 1953 had its usual number of honorary degrees, new college presidents, and fundraising drives. Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson received an honorary doctor's degree at



Iowa State College. The Rev. Gaylord M. Couchman was inaugurated as president of the University of Dubuque and Nathan M. Pusey, a native of Council Bluffs, was chosen as president of Harvard University. Coe College set a \$101,000 goal for its 1953-1954 Growth Fund campaign.

Colleges had their difficulties in 1953, too. The Chemistry building at the State University was extensively damaged and four persons were injured by a fire, but five hundred students escaped unharmed. A series of anonymous letters at the State Teachers College brought an investigation of five teachers by the State Board of Education, who quickly exonerated the faculty members. At Iowa State, jubilant undergraduates demanded a holiday after an upset homecoming football victory. Frustrated in their goal, the students blocked highways until dispersed by tear-gas.

Cornell College celebrated its centennial year with a series of impressive ceremonies and special days, climaxed by an anniversary pageant in June. Research scientists at the University of Iowa reported in December that tests with deep frozen male sperm cells in insemination experiments had succeeded, and the first child so conceived would be born early in 1954. The Danforth Memorial Chapel at the State University was dedicated by donor William H. Danforth of St. Louis in 1953.

The trend toward safe-and-sane parties following high school banquets and proms continued



during 1953. The all-night party at Creston included a chartered train trip with dancing, entertainment, and refreshments served on the railroad cars. Cherokee had movies, dancing, and a country club breakfast following the high school prom. These programs were the answer of various communities to the statistics which revealed that between May 1 and June 10 of each year since 1946, fifty teen-agers had died on state highways.

Iowa libraries also shared the news in 1953. Fairfield's library celebrated its 100th anniversary by dedicating a historical room. The town of Guttenberg secured for permanent display a facsimile set of the original Guttenberg Bible from Mainz, Germany. The cornerstone for the million-dollar Masonic Library in Cedar Rapids was laid on October 3. And as a sign of the times the Des Moines Public Library installed a coin-operated typewriter, which gave thirty minutes service for a dime.

The end of the fighting in the Korean war made a significant impact on religion and education. Peace was an answer to thousands of prayers. Peace also meant the return of thousands of young men whose educations had been interrupted by military service. College officials predicted confidently that 1,500 Iowans who were Korean veterans would help boost enrollments in 1953. Subsequent events proved this estimate a bit high, but all agreed it was good to have the boys back home.

ROBERT RUTLAND